

Claims

1. A software module for programming a graphical user interface, responsive to functionality information supplied by or retrieved from an application or applet, the software capable of modifying the graphical user interface when a new application or applet is launched.
2. A method of defining a graphical user interface in response to the functionality of an application or applet, comprising:
 - launching a first application;
 - retrieving functionality information of the first application;
 - defining a graphical user interface for controlling the functionality of the first application; and
 - controlling the first application with the defined GUI.
3. The method of claim 2, and further comprising:
 - redefining the graphical user interface in response to the loading of a second application; and
 - controlling the first and second applications with the redefined GUI.
4. The method of claim 2, and further comprising:
 - loading a second application; and
 - redefining the graphical user interface for controlling the functionality of each application.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein defining the graphical user interface comprises:
 - adding each function of the first application to the graphical user interface; and

registering each function of the application for notification by the graphical user interface when a user initiates a command calling for a registered function.

5 6. The method of claim 4, wherein redefining the graphical user interface comprises:

comparing each function of the second application with functions of the defined graphical use interface;

registering the function of the second application with the database for

10 notification by the graphical user interface when a user initiates a

command calling for the registered function if the function of the new application is already present in the graphical user interface;

adding the function of the second application to the graphical user interface if the function of the new application is not already present in the graphical user interface; and

15 registering the new function of the second application for notification by the graphical user interface when a user initiates a command calling for the registered function.

20 7. A shared graphical user interface capable of control of a plurality of computer applications or applets, the shared graphical user interface being defined and redefined as different applications or applets are launched, by receiving information from the applets or from software designed to retrieve the functionality of the applications or applets

25 8. A machine readable medium comprising machine readable instructions for causing a computer to perform a method comprising:
operating a user interface to a first application;

retrieving functionality information of the first application;
defining a graphical user interface for controlling the functionality of the first
application; and
controlling the first application with the defined GUI.

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9. A method of operating a computer system, comprising:
defining a graphical user interface responsive to functionality of a first
application loaded onto the computer system; and
redefining the graphical user interface responsive to the functionality of a second
application loaded onto the computer so as to control both the first and
the second applications with the graphical user interface.

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10. The method of claim 9, wherein defining the graphical user interface comprises:
adding each function of the first application to the graphical user interface; and
registering each function of the application for notification by the graphical user
interface when a user initiates a command calling for a registered
function.

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11. The method of 9, wherein redefining the graphical user interface comprises:
comparing each function of the second application with functions of the defined
graphical use interface;
registering the function of the second application with the database for
notification by the graphical user interface when a user initiates a
command calling for the registered function if the function of the new
application is already present in the graphical user interface;
adding the function of the second application to the graphical user interface if
the function of the new application is not already present in the graphical
user interface; and

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